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Applic. No. 10/823,222

Amdt. dated March 26, 2007

Reply to Office action of January 8, 2007

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CENTRAL FAX CENTER****MAR 26 2007**Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-14, and 16 remain in the application. Claims 1, 6, 7, 11-14 and 16-19 have been amended. Claims 5 and 15 are being cancelled herewith.

Method claim 1 has been amended to include all the limitations of the allowable device claim 6. Therefore, claims 1-4 are in condition to be rejoined and allowed.

In item 3 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 5, 7, and 11-19 as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

The Examiner alleges that it is unclear whether claims 5 and 15 are directed to the method or the apparatus for performing the method. Claims 5 and 15 have been cancelled from the application.

The Examiner alleges that claim 7 should define the blowing/suction nozzles as a part of the smoothing device since this is the function attributed to such nozzles in the

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specification. Claim 7 has been amended so as to facilitate prosecution of the application. Therefore, the rejection has been overcome.

The Examiner alleges that in claims 11, 15, and 16 it is not understood how the "vacuum device" applies a vacuum to the "suction openings" in a one after another chronological manner

since no structure has been recited to permit the vacuum device to operate in this manner. As noted above, claim 15 has been cancelled. Claims 11 and 16 have been amended so as to facilitate prosecution of the application. Therefore, the rejection has been overcome.

It is accordingly believed that the claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Should the Examiner find any further objectionable items, counsel would appreciate a telephone call during which the matter may be resolved. The above-noted changes to the claims are provided solely for cosmetic or clarificatory reasons. The changes are not provided for overcoming the prior art nor for any reason related to the statutory requirements for a patent.

In item 5 on page 3 of the Office action, claim 5 has been rejected as being fully anticipated by Sugiyama (U.S. Patent No. 4,355,800) under 35 U.S.C. § 102. As noted above, claim 5

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has been cancelled. Therefore, the rejection of claim 5 is moot.

It is appreciatively noted that claims 6 and 8-10 are allowed.

It is appreciatively noted from item 6 on page 3 of the Office action that claims 7 and 11-19 would be allowable if amended

to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph set forth in the Office action. As noted above, the claims have been amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Therefore, claims 7, 11-14, and 16-19 are allowable as well.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Since only allowable claims remain, the early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is solicited herewith.

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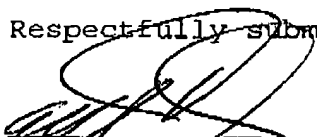
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Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect
to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner
Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



For Applicant(s)

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March 26, 2007

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